

BIBLE CHARACTERS

by

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CHAPTER 12

THE BLIND MAN AND JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

There are many persons who think of becoming disciples of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, but who, nevertheless, never become so. They turn away, and the reason is, that it costs them too much. Many people would be willing to serve CHRIST if it did not cost them anything.

The cry of the world now is for a religion without CHRIST in it. CHRIST would have millions more of disciples if it were not for the cross. But no man can be His disciple unless he denies himself, takes up his cross daily, and follows Him. A man may profess to be a Christian - that is one thing; but to be a disciple is quite another. A disciple is a follower and a learner, one who is willing to sit at CHRIST's feet, learn of Him, and follow Him.

I want to call attention to two extraordinary men. They were both living in the city of Jerusalem at the time that CHRIST was on earth. One of them has come down through history nameless. We do not know who he was. The name of the other is given. One was a beggar, and the other was one of the rich men of Jerusalem. One was a wealthy prince; and the other was not only a beggar, but blind from his birth. Yet in the Gospel of John, there is more space given to this blind beggar than to any other character. The reason why so much has been recorded of this man is because he took his stand for JESUS CHRIST.

It may be said that the beggar had not much to give up; but he may have had as much pride as a millionaire. It is a false idea that all pride is confined to the upper classes. You will find it in the lanes and alleys; you will find little, dirty, barefooted children who will get a string of shavings, put it round their necks, and strut down the street as if they were wearing golden beads. Pride is born and grows in the human heart. You do not plant it there; it grows there of itself. There is as much pride among the poor as among the rich; and that is one reason why more of them do not come to the Lord JESUS CHRIST: they do not like to be laughed at, scoffed at, sneered at, and ridiculed. It costs them too much.

Look at the account given in John 9, beginning at the fifth verse. In the previous chapter, CHRIST had been telling them that He was the Light of the world; and that if any man would follow Him he should not walk in darkness, but should have the light of life. After making a statement of that kind, CHRIST often gave an evidence of the truth of what He said by

performing some miracle. If He had said He was the Light of the world, He would show them in what way He was the Light of the world. If He had said He was the Life of the world, He would prove Himself to be such by quickening and raising the dead; just as He did, after telling them that He was the Resurrection and the Life, by going to the graveyard of Bethany and calling Lazarus forth. When Lazarus heard the voice of his friend saying, Lazarus, come forth! he came forth immediately.

The Son of GOD does not ask men to believe in Him without a reason for so doing. We need to keep this in mind. You might as well ask a man to see without light or eyes, as to believe without testimony.

He gave them good reason for believing in Him, and proved His Messiahship and authority. He not only told them that He had the power, but He showed them that He had.

These two men, then, were both at Jerusalem. One held as high a position, and the other as low a position, as any in the city. One was at the top of the social ladder, and the other at the bottom. And yet they both made a good confession; and one was as acceptable to JESUS as the other.

The man mentioned in this chapter was born blind; and we find the Lord's disciples asking Him, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? JESUS answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of GOD should be made manifest in him..... When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Observe what that man did. He did just what CHRIST told him to do. The Saviors command to him was to go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and he went his way therefore... and came seeing. He was blessed in the very act of obedience.

If anyone had met that man going to the pool with clay on his eyes they might have said, How do you feel? Do you feel you have got your sight?

No, I don't feel that I have my sight; I do not feel any better than I did before I met the Prophet. In fact, he was not any better: but he did what the Prophet told him to do; and the result was that he received his sight. If anyone had asked him after he had been to the pool how he felt, he would have said, I feel all right; I can see.

Of all the blind men who were healed while CHRIST was on earth, no two were healed in exactly the same way. GOD does not generally repeat Himself. JESUS met blind Bartimeus near the gates of Jericho, and called him to Him and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? His answer was, Lord that I might receive my sight. Now see what He did. He did not send Bartimeus off to Jerusalem twenty miles away to the pool of Siloam to wash. He did not spit on the ground, and make clay, and anoint his eyes; but with a word He wrought the cure, saying, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

Suppose that blind beggar had gone from Jericho, and had met the other one at the gate of the city of Jerusalem, and asked him how it was he got his sight; and that they began to compare

notes - one telling his experience and the other telling his. Imagine the first saying, I do not believe that you have your sight; because you did not get it in the same way that I got mine. Would the different ways the Lord JESUS had in healing them make their cases the less true? Yet there are some people who talk just that way now. Because GOD does not deal with some exactly as He does with others, people think that GOD is not dealing with them at all. GOD seldom repeats Himself. No two persons were ever converted exactly alike as far as my experience goes. Each one must have an experience of his own. Let the Lord give sight in His own way.

There are thousands of people who keep away from CHRIST because they are looking for the experience of some dear friend or relative; but they cannot judge of their conversion by the experience of others. They have heard someone tell how he was converted twenty years ago, and they expect to be converted in the same way; but persons should never count upon having an experience precisely similar to that of someone else of whom they have heard or read. They must go right to the Lord Himself, and do what He tells them to do. If He says, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash, then they must go. If He says, Come just as you are, and promises to give sight, then they must come, and let Him do His own work in His own way, just as this blind man did. It was a peculiar way by which to give a man sight; but it was the Lord's way: and the man's sight was given him. We might think it was enough to make a man blind to fill his eyes with clay. True he was now doubly blind; for if he had been able to see before, the clay would have deprived him of his sight. But the Lord wanted to show the people that they were not only spiritually blind by nature, but that they had allowed themselves to be blinded by the clay of this world, which had been spread over their eyes. But GOD's ways are not our ways. If He is going to work, we must let Him do as He pleases.

Shall we dictate to the Almighty? Shall the clay say to the Potter, Why hast thou made me thus? Who art thou, O man, that replies against GOD? Let GOD work in His own way; and when the HOLY GHOST comes let Him mark out a way for Himself. We must be willing to submit, and to do what the Lord tells us, without any questioning whatever. He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him.

Now, if he had been like a good many at the present time, I am afraid he would have remained silent. He would have said, Well, now I have got my sight, and I will keep about it. It is not necessary for me to confess it. Why should I say anything? There is a good deal of opposition to this man JESUS CHRIST; and there are a great many bitter things said in Jerusalem against Him; and He has a great many enemies. I think there will be trouble if I talk about Him; so I will say nothing. Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him. But he said, I am he. He not only got his eyes opened, but, thank GOD, he got his mouth opened, too. Surely the next thing after we get our eyes opened is for us to open our lips and begin to testify for Him.

"Therefore, said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?"

"He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received

sight.'

He told a straightforward story, just what the Lord had done for him. That is all. That is what a witness ought to do - tell what he knows, not what he does not know. He did not try to make a long speech. It is not the most flippant and fluent witness who has the most influence with a jury.

This man's testimony is what I call experience. One of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the Gospel today is that the narration of the experience of the church is not encouraged. There are a great many men and women who come into the church, and we never hear anything of their experience, nor the Lord's dealings with them. If we could it would be a great help to others. It would stimulate faith and encourage the more feeble of the flock.

The Apostle Paul's experience has been recorded three times. I have no doubt that he told it everywhere he went; how GOD had met him, how GOD had opened his eyes and his heart; and how GOD had blessed him. Depend upon it, experience has its place; the great mistake that is made now is in the other extreme. In some places and at some periods there has been too much of it; it has been all experience; and now we have to let the pendulum swing too far the other way.

I think it not only right, but exceedingly useful, that we should give our experience. This man bore testimony to what the Lord had done for him.

And it was the Sabbath day when JESUS made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes; and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of GOD, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes?

What an opportunity he had for evading the question! He might have said: Why, I have never seen Him. When He met me I was blind; I could not see Him. When I came back I could not find Him; and I have not formed any opinion yet. He might have put them off in that way; but he said, He is a Prophet. He gave them his opinion. If the expression may be allowed, he was a man of back-bone. He had moral courage. He stood right up among the enemies of JESUS CHRIST, the Pharisees, and told them what he thought of Him - He is a prophet.

If you can get young Christians to talk, not about themselves, but about Him, their testimony will have power. Many converts talk altogether about their own experience - I, I, I, I. But this blind man got away to the Master and said, He is a prophet. He believed, and he told them what he believed.

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him; he shall

He spoke for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was CHRIST, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore, said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

I have always had great contempt for those parents. They had a noble son; and their lack of moral courage then and there to confess what the Lord JESUS CHRIST had done for their son, makes them unworthy of him. They say, by what means he now seeth, we know not, which looks as if they do not believe their own son. He is of age; ask him.

It is sorrowfully true today that we have hundreds and thousands of people who are professed disciples of JESUS CHRIST; but when the time comes that they ought to take their stand, and give a clear testimony for Him, they testify against Him. You can always tell those who are really converted to GOD. The new man always takes his stand for GOD; and the old man takes his stand against Him. These parents had an opportunity to confess the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and to do great things for Him; but they neglected their golden opportunity.

If they had but stood up with their noble son, and said. This is our son. We have tried all the physicians, and used all the means in our power, and were unable to do anything for him; but now, out of gratitude, we confess that he received his sight from the prophet of Galilee, JESUS of Nazareth, they might have led many to believe on Him. But, instead of that, they said, we know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not. They did not want to tell how he got his sight, simply because it would cost them too much. They represent those Christians who do not want to serve CHRIST if it is going to cost them anything; if they have to give up society, position or worldly pleasures. They do not want to come out. This is what keeps hundreds and thousands from becoming Christians. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was CHRIST, he should be put out of the synagogue.

It was a serious thing to be put out of the synagogue in those days. It does not amount to much now. If a man is put out of one church, another may receive him; but when he went out of the synagogue there was no other to take him in. It was the State church: it was the only one they had. If he were cast out of that, he was cast out of society, position, and everything else; and his business suffered also.

But this man had counted the cost. It was as if he had said: If I have to be cast out of society for JESUS CHRIST's sake, then out I will go. If I have to suffer persecution and ridicule, I am ready for them. And he took his stand. But his parents thought it would cost too much. Gratitude for what the Lord had done for their son ought to have prompted them to take their stand and say, We will bear the cross with our son; we will make our confession of CHRIST with him; instead of which they said, He is of age; ask him. "Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, 'Give GOD the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.'

It looks now as if they were trying to prejudice him against CHRIST: but he answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

There were no infidels or philosophers there who could persuade him out of that. There were not men enough in Jerusalem to make him believe that his eyes were not opened. Did he not know that for over twenty years he had been feeling his way around Jerusalem; that he had been led by

children and friends; and that during all these years he had not seen the sun in its glory, nor any of the beauties of nature? Did he not know that he had been feeling his way through life up to that day?

And do we not know that we have been born of GOD, and that we have got the eyes of our souls opened? Do we not know that old things have passed away and all things have become new, and that the eternal light has dawned upon our souls? Do we not know that the chains that once bound us have been snapped asunder; that the darkness is gone, and that the light has come? Have we not liberty where we once had bondage? Do we not know it? If so, then let us not hold our peace. Let us testify for the Son of GOD, and say, as the blind man did in Jerusalem, One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. I have a new power; I have a new light; I have a new love; I have a new nature. I have something that reaches out towards GOD; and by the eye of faith I can see yonder Heaven; I can see CHRIST standing at the right hand of GOD: by and by, when my journey is over, I am going to hear that voice saying, Come up hither, when I shall sit down in the kingdom of GOD.

Once it was a mystery to us, but He has opened our eyes and shown us these things. If our eyes have been thus opened, then let us not be ashamed to confess CHRIST, and give our testimony for Him.

Then said they to him again, What did He do to thee? how opened He thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be His disciples?"

This was a most extraordinary man. Here was a young convert in Jerusalem, not a day old, trying to make converts of these Pharisees - men, who had been fighting CHRIST for nearly three years. He asked them if they would also become His disciples. He was ready to tell his experience to all who were willing to hear it. If he had covered it up at the first and had not come out at once, he would not have had the privilege of testifying in that way, neither would he have been a winner of souls. That man was going to be a soul-winner. I venture to say he became one of the best workers in Jerusalem. I have no doubt he stood well to the front on the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached: and when the wounded were around him, he went to work and told how the Lord had blessed him, and How He would bless them. He was a worker not an idler.

It is a very sad thing that so many of GOD's children are dumb; yet it is true. Parents think it a great calamity to have their children born dumb; they would mourn over it, and weep; and well they might: but did you ever think of the many dumb children GOD has? The churches are full of them; they never speak for CHRIST. They can talk about politics, art, and science; they can speak well enough and fast enough about the fashions of the day: but they have no voice for the Son of GOD.

Dear friend, if He is your Savior, then confess Him. All the followers of JESUS should bear testimony for Him. How many opportunities each one has in society and in business to speak a word for JESUS CHRIST! How many opportunities occur daily wherein every Christian might be instant in season, out of season in pleading for JESUS! In so doing we receive blessing for ourselves, and also become a means of blessing to others.

This man wanted to make converts of those Pharisees, who only a little while before had their hands full of stones, ready to put the Son of GOD to death; and even now had murder in their hearts. They reviled him, saying, 'Thou art His disciple, but we are Moses disciples; we know that GOD spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is.'

Well, now, the once blind man might have said, There is a good deal of opposition, and I will say no more; I will keep quiet, and walk off and leave them. But thank GOD, he stood right up with the courage of a Paul.

"The man answered and said unto them: 'Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence He is; and yet He hath opened mine eyes! Now we know that GOD heareth not sinners; but if a man be a worshipper of GOD, and doeth His will, him He heareth.'

Now I call that logic. If he had been through a theological seminary he could not have given a better answer. It is sound doctrine, and was a good sermon for those who were opposed to the work of CHRIST. If this man were not of GOD He could do nothing. This is very strong proof of the mans conviction as to who the Lord JESUS was. It is as though he said: I, a man born blind, and He can give me sight. He a sinner! Why, it is unreasonable! If JESUS CHRIST were a man only, how could He give that man sight? Let philosophers, skeptics, and infidels answer the question. Here he stood as a witness to the power of the Lord JESUS to give sight to the blind, saying, as it were, I am the man who once was blind, but now I see.

After this splendid confession of the divinity and power of CHRIST, they answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins; and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. They could not meet his argument, and so they cast him out. So it is now. If we give a clear testimony for CHRIST, the world will cast us out. It is a good thing to give our testimony so clearly for CHRIST that the world dislikes it; it is a good thing when such testimony for CHRIST causes the world to cast us out.

Let us see what happened when they cast him out. JESUS heard, that is the next thing; no sooner did they cast him out than JESUS heard of it. No man was ever cast out by the world for the sake of JESUS CHRIST, but He heard of it; indeed He will be the first to hear of it. **"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, 'Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord I believe! And he worshipped Him."**

That was a good place to leave him - at the feet of JESUS. They cast him right into the bosom of the loving Savior, by whom he was lovingly embraced and blessed. We shall meet him by and by in the kingdom of GOD.

His testimony has been ringing down through the ages these last eighteen hundred years. It has been talked about ever since it happened, wherever the Word of GOD has been known. It was a wonderful days work that man did for the Son of GOD; doubtless there will be many in eternity who will thank GOD for his confession of CHRIST.

By thus showing his gratitude in coming out and confessing CHRIST, he has left a record that

has stirred the Church of GOD ever since. He is one of the characters that always stirs one up, imparting new life and fire, new boldness and courage, when one reads about him. This is what we need today as much as ever - to stand up for the Son of GOD. Let the Pharisees rage against us; let the world go on mocking, and sneering, scoffing: we will stand up courageously for the Son of GOD. If they cast us out, they will cast us right into His own bosom. He will take us to His own loving arms. It is a blessed thing to live so godly in CHRIST JESUS that the world will not want you - that they will cast you out.

Now we come to Joseph Of Arimathea. I do not think he came out quite so nobly as this blind beggar did; but he did come out, and we will thank GOD for that. We read in John that, for fear of the Jews, he was kept back from confessing openly.

And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of JESUS, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of JESUS; and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of JESUS.

Read the four accounts given, in the four Gospels, of Joseph of Arimathea.

There is very seldom anything mentioned by all four of the Evangelists. If Matthew and Mark refer to an event, it is omitted by Luke and John; and, if it occur in the latter, it may not be contained in the former. Josephs Gospel is made up of that which is absent from the others, in most instances - as in the case of the blind man alluded to. But all four record what Joseph did for CHRIST. All His disciples had forsaken Him; one had sold Him, and another had denied Him. He was left in gloom and darkness, when Joseph of Arimathea came out and confessed Him.

It was the death of JESUS CHRIST that brought out Joseph of Arimathea. Probably he was one of the number that stood at the cross when the centurion smote his breast, and cried out, Truly this was the Son of GOD; and he was doubtless convinced at the same time. He was a disciple before, because we read that on the night of the trial he did not give his consent to the death of CHRIST. There must have been some surprise in the council-chamber on that occasion, when Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, stood up and said, I will never give my consent to His death. There were seventy of those men; but we have very good reason to believe that there were two of them who, like Caleb and Joshua of old, had the courage to stand up for JESUS CHRIST - these were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus: neither of them gave their consent to the death of CHRIST. But I am afraid Joseph did not come out and say he was a disciple - for we do not find a word said about his being one until after the crucifixion.

I am afraid there are many Josephs today, men of position, of whom it could be said they are secret disciples.

We read that he was a rich and honorable counselor, a just and a good man, and holding a high position in the government of the nation. He was also a benevolent man, and a devout man, too; what more could he need? GOD wants something more than Josephs good life and high position. A man may be all Joseph was, and yet be without CHRIST.

But a crisis came in his history. If he was to take his stand, now was the time for him to do it. I consider that this is one of the grandest, the noblest acts that any man ever did, to take his stand

for CHRIST when there seemed nothing, humanly speaking, that CHRIST could give him. Joseph had no hope concerning the resurrection; and it seems none of our Lord's disciples understood that He was going to rise again; even Peter, James, and John, as well as the rest, scarcely believed that He had risen when He appeared to them. They had anticipated that He would set up His kingdom, but He had no scepter in His hand; and, so far as they could see, no kingdom in view. In fact, He was dead on the cross, with nails through His hands and feet. There He hung until His spirit took its flight: that which had made Him so grand, so glorious, and so noble, had now left the body.

Joseph might have said, It will be no use my taking a stand for Him now. If I come out and confess Him I shall probably lose my position in society and in the council, and my influence. I had better remain where I am.

There was no earthly reward for him; there was nothing, humanly speaking, that could have induced him to come out; and yet we are told by Mark that he went boldly into Pilate's judgment-hall and begged the body of JESUS. I consider this was one of the sublimest, grandest acts that any man ever did. In that darkness and gloom - His disciples having all forsaken Him; Judas having sold Him for thirty pieces of silver; the chief apostle Peter having denied Him with a curse, swearing that he never knew Him; the chief priests having found Him guilty of blasphemy; the council having condemned Him to death; and when there was a hiss going up to Heaven over all Jerusalem - Joseph went right against the current, right against the influence of all his friends, and begged the body of JESUS.

Blessed act! Doubtless he upbraided himself for not having been more bold in his defense of CHRIST when He was tried, and before He was condemned to be crucified. The Scripture says he was an honorable man, and honorable counselor, a rich man; and yet we have only the record of that one thing - the one act of begging the body of JESUS. But what he did for the Son of GOD, out of pure love for Him, will live forever; that one act rises up above everything else that Joseph of Arimathea ever did. He might have given large sums of money to different institutions, he might have been very good to the poor, he might have been very kind to the needy in various ways; but that one act for JESUS CHRIST, on that memorable, that dark afternoon, was one of the noblest acts that man ever performed. He must have been a man of great influence, or Pilate would not have given him the body.

And now we see another secret disciple, Nicodemus. Nicodemus and Joseph go to the cross. Joseph is there first, and while he is waiting for Nicodemus to come, he looks down the hill; and I can imagine his delight as he sees his friend coming with a hundred pounds of ointment. Although JESUS CHRIST had led such a lowly life, He was to have a kingly anointing and burial. GOD had touched the hearts of these two noble men, and they drew out the nails and took the body down, washed the blood away from the wounds that had been made on His back by the scourge, and on His head by the crown of thorns; they then took the lifeless form, washed it clean, and wrapped it in fine linen, and Joseph laid Him in his own sepulcher.

When all was dark and gloomy; when his cause seemed to be lost, and the hope of the Church buried in that new tomb, Joseph took his stand for the One despised and rejected of men. It was the greatest act of his life. And, my reader, if you want to stand with the Lord JESUS CHRIST in glory; if you want the power of GOD to be bestowed upon you for service down here, you must not hesitate to take your stand boldly and manfully for the most despised of all men - the Man

CHRIST JESUS. His cause is unpopular; the ungodly sneer at His name. But if you want the blessings of Heaven on your soul and to hear the Well done, good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! take your stand at once for Him, whatever your position may be, or however much your friends may be against you. Decide for JESUS CHRIST, the crucified but risen Savior; go outside the camp and bear His reproach; take up your cross and follow Him: and by and by you will lay it down, and take the crown to wear forever.

I remember some meetings being held in a locality where the tide did not rise very quickly; and bitter and reproachful things were being said about the work. But one day, one of the most prominent men in the place rose and said, I want it to be known that I am a disciple of JESUS CHRIST; and if there is any odium to be cast on His cause, I am prepared to take my share of it. It went through the meeting like an electric current; and a blessing came at once to his own soul and to the souls of others. If we expect to reign with CHRIST in glory, we must be willing to take our stand and suffer with Him down here. Joseph was, no doubt associated with a class who believed, but who loved the praise of men more than the praise of GOD.

They would rather have the praise of man than the smile of Heaven.

Depend upon it, there is no crown without a cross. We must take our proper position here, as Joseph did. It cost him something to take up his cross. I have no doubt they put him out of the council and out of the synagogue. He lost his standing, and perhaps his wealth: like all other faithful followers of CHRIST, he became, henceforth, a despised and unpopular man.

The blind man could not have done what Joseph did. Some men can do what others cannot. GOD will hold us responsible for our own influence. Let each of us do what we can. Even though the conduct of our Lord's professed followers was anything but helpful to those who, like Joseph, had but little courage to come out on the Lord's side, he was not deterred from taking his stand.

Whatever it cost us, let us be true Christians, and take a firm stand. It is like the dust in the balance in comparison to what GOD has in store for us. We can afford to suffer with Him a little while if we are going to reign with Him forever; we can afford to take up the cross and follow Him, to be despised and rejected by the world, with such a bright prospect in view. If the glories are real, it will be to His praise and to our advantage to share in His rejection now.

Let us confess Him at all times and in all places. Let us show our friends that we are out-and-out on His side. Everyone has a circle that he can influence; and GOD will hold us responsible for the influence we possess.

Joseph of Arimathea and the blind man had circles in which their influence was powerful. I can influence people that others cannot reach; and they, in their turn, can reach a class that I could not touch. It is only for a little while that we confess Him and work for Him. It is only for a few days or hours; and then the eternal ages will roll on, and great will be our reward in the crowning day that is coming. We shall then hear the Master say to us, Well done, good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. GOD grant it may be so!

THE END